

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4732

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 4913

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: SREF, PEPR, RP, MY

SUBJ: MALAYSIAN HOME MINISTER COMMENTS ON FILIPINO REFUGEES AND
THE MORO PROBLEM

REF : A) KUALA LUMPUR 4417, B) MANILA 8788, C) JAKARTA 6939
(NOTAL), D) KUALA LUMPUR 0531

1. BEFORE DEPARTING FOR CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON THE AMBASSADOR CALLED ON HOME MINISTER TAN SRI GHAZALI SHAFIE MAY 29. IN THE CONTEXT OF DISCUSSING THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROBLEM, GHAZALI STRESSED THAT WHILE THIS IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF CONCERN, PERHAPS EVEN MORE ALARMING AND USUALLY OVERLOOKED IN THE EQUATION IS THE FACT THAT MALAYSIA IS PROVIDING HAVEN FOR OVER 90,000 FILIPINO MUSLIM RFUGGEES IN THE STATE OF SABAH.

2. WHEN THE AMBASSADOR REFERRED TO THE RECENT MEETING BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN AND INDONESIAN PRESIDENT SUHARTO IN LABUAN (SABAH), FOLLOWING WHICH IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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PREPARED TO USE THEIR GOOD OFFICES TO HELP BRING ABOUT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE MOROS AND THE GOP, GHAZALI RETORTED BITTERLY THAT THIS WILL NOT GET ANYWHERE AS LONG AS THE GOP CONTINUES ITS PRESENT COURSE OF SEEKING TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM BY MILITARY MEANS. HE WENT ON TO CHARACTERIZE HASHIM SALAMAT AS A "STOOGES", CITING THE LATTER'S REBUFF BY THE RECENT ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTER'S CONFERENCE IN DAKAR AND THE RECOGNITION

INSTEAD BY THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF HIS RIVAL, NUR MISUARI, AS LEADER OF TH MNLF. HE INDICATED THAT THE GOP'S INSISTENCE ON ATTEMPTING TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT WITH HASHIM SALAMAT WAS EVIDENCE OF BAD FAITH. MEANWHILE, STRESS BY THE GOP ON A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM COULD ONLY LEAD TO A CONTINUED MUSLIM REFUGEE INFLOW TO MALAYSIA, HE OPINED.

3. COMMENT: GHAZALI IS VERY PROUD OF HIS PERSONAL RAPPORT WITH INDONESIA, THAI AND SINGAPOREAN LEADERS, AND TAKES CONSIDERABLE CREDIT FOR MALAYSIA'S CLOSE SECURITY TIES WITH THOSE COUNTRIES. IN CONTRAST, HE ADMITTED THAT HE IS NOT WELL ACQUAINTED WITH FILIPINO LEADERSHIP, WHOSE INTENTIONS IN DEALING WITH THE MORO DISSIDENT PROBLEM HE CLEARLY CONSIDERS SUSPECT. (SEE ALSO PARA 5 OF REF D).
ROSENTHAL

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